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HALL CAVENDISH PUBLICATION 44 IN FORTNIGHTLY PARTS

The Ancestral Trail

CYBER CHALLENGE IN THE NEXT DIMENSION

44 Quasar, Faceless Fiend

Seized by a savage super being

Jubilee Heller

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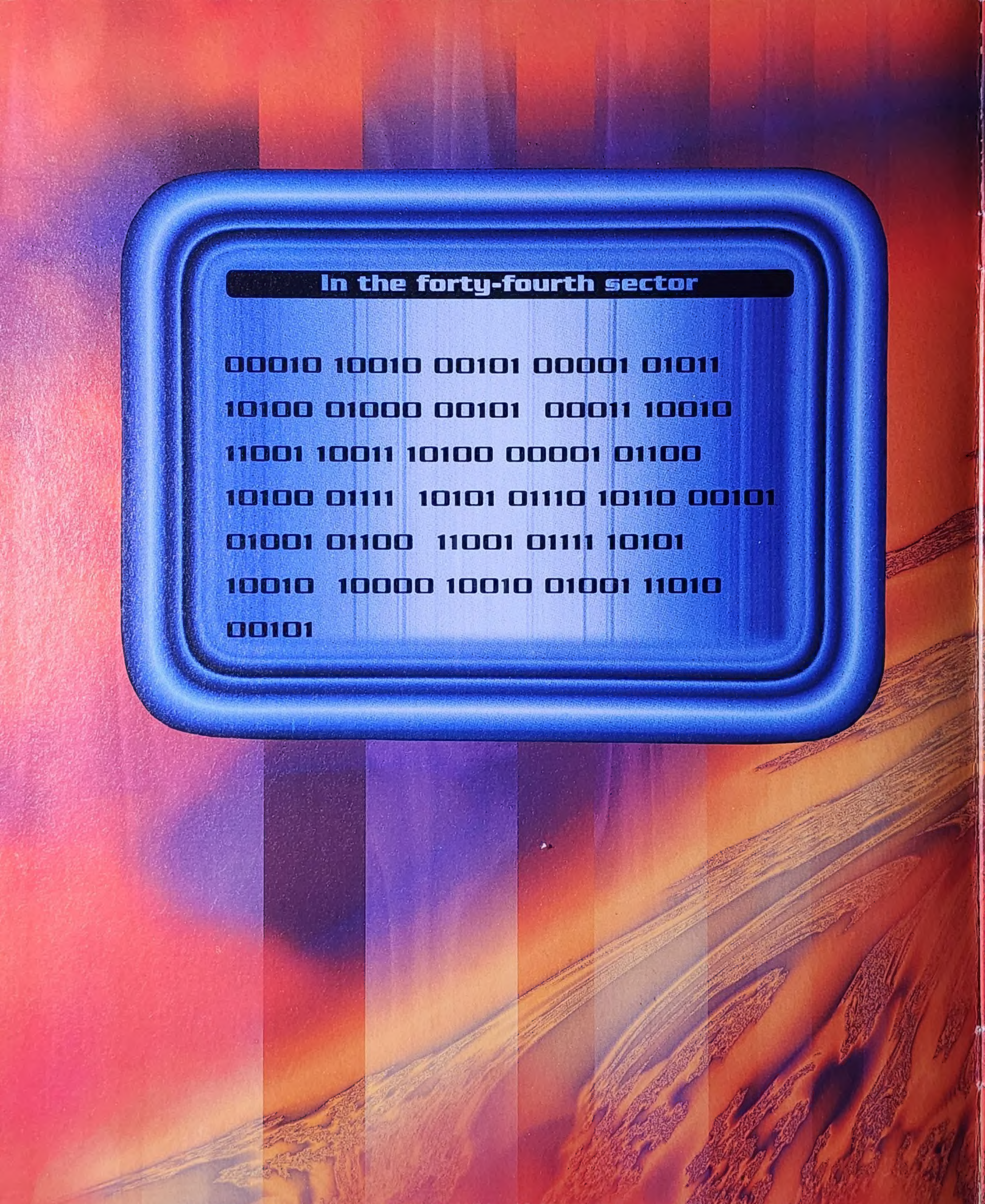
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Computer graphics produced by Mehau Kulyk

Holding tightly on to the cyber cruiser's controls, Richard stared grimly at the solid wall that the flying machine was speeding towards. He knew it would be impossible to stop the craft in time to avert an imminent collision. They were only moments away from disaster.

Then, amazingly, the massive obstacle began to change appearance. Its colour darkened and changed into a deep red. Richard looked on in bemusement as a small hole appeared in the wall. The hole quickly widened. Soon it was large enough for the whole of the cyber cruiser to fit through.

"Nicefun!" Teeza howled.

With a whoosh, the craft shot through the opening. A relieved Richard wiped the sweat from his brow and allowed himself to relax. He did not know what had caused the opening in the wall to appear and he did not care. He was simply happy to be alive.

Tractor Beam

"Let's slow down and see where we are," Richard said as he loosened his grip on the cruiser's joystick. Teeza cheerfully nodded his approval.

A worried look appeared on Richard's face. "That's funny," he frowned, "the controls don't seem to be responding – we're going faster and faster."

Richard grappled with the controls. However, it soon became clear that his efforts were useless. It was as if some unseen force had the cyber cruiser under its control. "We'll just have to wait and see where we're going," Richard shrugged.

Their enforced journey carried them through a kaleidoscope of strange colours and shapes that floated in the darkness of Cyber Space. The patches of intense colour swirled majestically around the cyber cruiser as it careered forward.

Once again, Teeza was enjoying the sights. The wigmat's hoots of amusement helped ease Richard's concern over their predicament. "Pretty colours. Nicecool," the little creature happily chuckled.

Sinister sphere

It was during one of Teeza's frequent delighted outbursts that something caught Richard's attention: In the far distance, he noticed a tiny pin-prick of light. The cyber cruiser was heading in its direction.

As they drew closer, Richard realized what the object was. Bathed in a soft sheen of diffused light was a spinning, silver-coloured globe.

Something told Richard this was the source of the power that had taken over the controls of his flying machine.

Set in the centre of the sphere was a small circular hole. Richard could not even begin to guess at its purpose.

Richard looked on helplessly as the cruiser suddenly began to accelerate as if it were driving itself. It was on a direct course for the small hole in the spinning globe.

"Glittering ball – nicefun!" Teeza happily exclaimed.

"I don't think it's fun at all," Richard said. "We're heading straight for that hole. The cruiser will never fit through it!"

"Badvibe!" Teeza muttered, his mood changing.

Without any warning, the silvery globe began to pulsate and grow. Richard held his breath.

"Hold on tight!" Richard cried in a shaky voice. "I think we're going to crash!"

Behind him, Teeza was trembling with fear as the cyber cruiser came to within touching distance of the shiny globe.

Richard closed his eyes and prepared for the speeding craft to hit the spinning sphere. At that moment, something totally unexpected happened.

INTO THE FRACTAL WORLD

Instead of smashing into the weird obstacle that hung in the cyber cruiser's path, the flying machine began to change shape. Its bodywork distorted and the craft lengthened in size.

Inside, Richard and Teeza were completely unaware of the amazing transformation that the cruiser was undergoing. They could only watch as a jet of white light blazed from the small hole in the globe and the cyber cruiser was sucked into the opening.

In the blink of an eye, the pair were inside the strange spherical object.

After all the recent excitement, Richard was relieved when the cyber cruiser came to a halt and landed of its own accord. As the doors to the craft slid open, he wondered again who was controlling the machine.

Red world

Followed by Teeza, Richard climbed out of the craft and looked around. They were standing in what looked like the interior of a cave. All around were strangely shaped rock formations, made from a glowing red material that Richard had never before seen.

"I wonder who lives here?" Richard said.

The answer to his question was not long in coming. In the shadows, Richard

spotted movement. He stared aghast as a curious creature scuttled into view. Roughly the same size as Richard, its alien form glowed like the fingers of a luminous clock. Other similar beasts followed. Richard drew his sword and waited to see what they would do.

THE FACELESS FIEND

The creatures edged towards Richard and then stopped. Richard held his breath. Suddenly, the sound of laughter could be heard. Richard looked around to see where the noise was coming from.

A figure emerged from the darkness. Dressed in a black cloak that obscured its face, and clutching a sparkling crystal ball, the newcomer walked towards Richard.

"Greetings, Chosen One," it said in a masculine voice. "How splendid of you to drop in and see me."

Richard glared at the figure defiantly. "Who are you and what do you want of me?" he demanded.

"They call me Quasar, and these are my pets, the fractines," said the newcomer, gesturing towards the strange, luminous creatures. "I have brought you here so that we might have a little chat."

"What about?"

"Oh, about lots of things," Quasar sneered. "Too many to mention, too numerous to name."

Richard tightened his grip on the sword. "I'm in no mood for riddles," he said.

"So, the youngster needs to be taught a lesson." There was a note of anger in Quasar's voice.

The hooded form looked down at the crystal ball and concentrated for a few moments. Without warning, there was a flash of light and Richard found himself floating in mid-air.

Evil bubble

Richard struggled and discovered that he was trapped within some kind of transparent bubble of energy. It was similar to the forcefield that Robo had erected on several occasions in order to protect Richard. Alongside him, Teeza was caught in a similar trap.

"My master, the Evil One himself, tells me that you have been causing trouble," Quasar continued. "It's a dirty job, I know, but I'm here to trim your claws."

Quasar's menacing laugh pierced the air as the balls of energy that held Richard and Teeza began to spin wildly. Feeling dizzy and a little sick, Richard could hear Teeza's mournful cries.

All of a sudden, the spinning ceased and Richard dropped to the floor feeling dazed and shaken. As he picked himself up he noticed that the bubble of energy had disappeared. So, too, had Teeza's.

"I hate to burst your bubble," Quasar said, chuckling at his little joke, "but we have more pressing concerns."

BROKEN SPHERE

Again Quasar concentrated on the sphere he was holding. There was another flash of light and Richard and Teeza were temporarily dazzled as the cave in which they were standing changed colour from red to blue.

"Pretty colours... Nicecool!" the excited wigmat cheerfully exclaimed. He had evidently forgotten about the brooding presence of the evil Quasar.

Quasar swung his head around to face Teeza. "Be quiet!" he snapped in irritation.

It was then that Richard decided to take a chance. While Quasar was distracted by the wigmat, he took aim and threw his sword at the orb that the creature was holding. His heart leaped as he scored a direct hit and the crystal ball fell to the ground, smashing into pieces.

Amongst the fragments, a small triangular object could be seen. Before Quasar could move, Teeza darted forward and picked it up.

"No! No! No!" screamed Quasar. His arrogance had been replaced by panic. "Give me the Omni piece back!"

"Omni piece?" Richard exclaimed. "Where did that come from?"

"Was inside pretty crystal ball," giggled Teeza as he hopped around, waving the Omni piece above his head.

FADE OUT

"Give it back to me," continued Quasar. "I can't live without it."

However, it was already too late. Before Richard's amazed eyes, the cloaked figure began to fall apart. Pieces of Quasar's garb dropped away from his body and floated off like smoke in the wind.

"I want my Omni piece," Quasar pleaded. "Wait until my master, the Evil One, hears what you have done to me!"

As he spoke, Quasar's voice began to change. Its pitch lowered and withered away until the sound resembled the croaking of a frog.

The remains of his body broke into thin, watery pieces. These were swept away until nothing remained of the once formidable creature.

"Put the Omni piece in your pouch along with the other one," Richard told Teeza. "Let's get out of this place."

The pair moved towards the cyber cruiser and then realized that their path was blocked. Growling ominously at them was a horde of fractines.

It was then that Richard remembered

his sword. Rushing over to where it lay, he picked it up and held it aloft.

His action did not seem to perturb the fractines. One of them scuttled over to him and tried to take a bite out of his leg with razor-sharp teeth.

Richard swung his sword and cut the creature in two.

Battle to the End

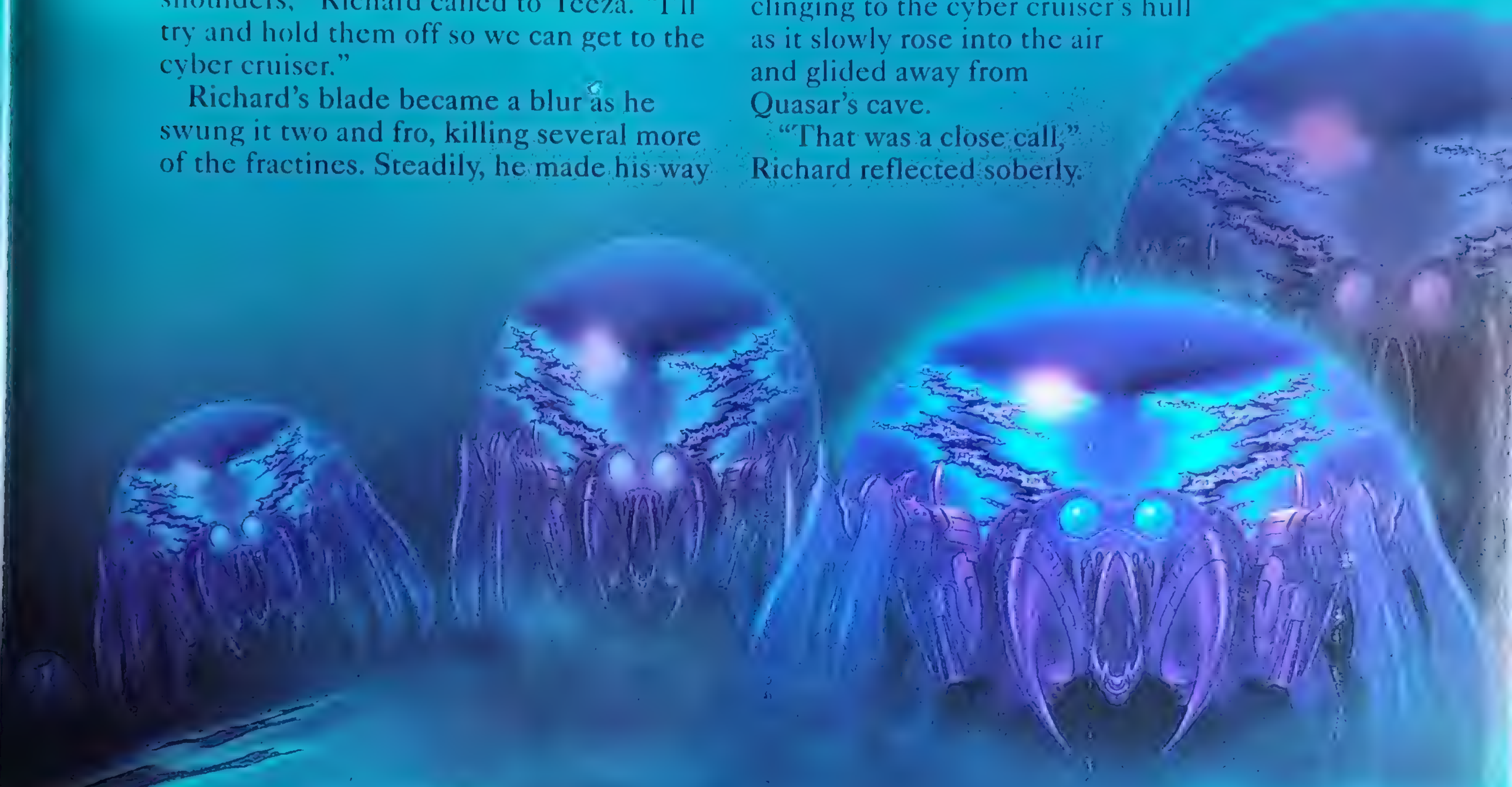
Sticky fluid gushed from the remains of the fractine as more of the creatures moved to attack Richard. "Climb on to my shoulders," Richard called to Teeza. "I'll try and hold them off so we can get to the cyber cruiser."

Richard's blade became a blur as he swung it two and fro, killing several more of the fractines. Steadily, he made his way through the heaving mass, taking great care to avoid their terrible jaws.

Richard gave a gasp of relief when they finally made it to the flying machine. The craft was surrounded by fractines and Richard had to use his sword to clear them away. Beads of sweat poured down his brow as he opened the doors. With Teeza clinging to him, Richard climbed inside.

Richard started up the engines and was relieved to discover that, with Quasar gone, the controls were now responding to him. Several of the fractines were clinging to the cyber cruiser's hull as it slowly rose into the air and glided away from Quasar's cave.

"That was a close call," Richard reflected soberly.



Locating the exit to Quasar's weird world was not an easy task. Eventually, Richard spotted the small circular hole by which they had entered. He saw that it was far too tiny for the cyber cruiser to fit through, but he remembered that the flying machine had somehow managed to decrease in size when they had first arrived in Quasar's world.

Exit to freedom

Once more, Richard took a chance. With Teeza groaning in dismay, he steered the cruiser towards the hole. Again the craft began to change shape; it lengthened and grew thinner. Richard gave a cry of triumph as the cruiser sped through the opening. They were free.

However, they were not yet out of danger. The bright tapestry of spectacular coloured shapes that Teeza had so enjoyed looking at earlier was gone. Now an ominous vortex of red swirling gases could be seen.

"I don't like the look of this," Richard considered.

Carefully, he piloted the cyber cruiser through the vortex. It was immediately hit by a wave of turbulence. The flying machine was rocked back and forth.

As before, Teeza seemed unaware of the dangers that confronted them. The little wigmat emitted whoops of delight, while Richard fought with the cruiser's controls.

After what seemed ages, the vibrations stopped. They had finally escaped from the spinning vortex.

Behind them the speed of the deadly funnel of gases increased. The death of Quasar had somehow made his world unstable. It was destroying itself. Deafening blasts could be heard as the gases began to ignite. Even from inside the safe confines

of the cyber cruiser, Richard and Teeza felt the air grow hotter.

FRACTAL EXPLOSION

Suddenly, there was an enormous explosion. Richard looked behind him and saw that Quasar's fractal world was gone.

All that remained were fragments of debris floating aimlessly in the vacuum of Cyber Space.

The cyber cruiser juddered and there was a loud cracking noise. Looking out of the window, Richard was amazed to see that it had broken through what appeared to be another spinning sphere. This one was bigger than the other, and had a decayed, mottled pattern on its outer surface. It reminded Richard of a huge egg.

SAUCER ATTACK

Yet again, the landscape had changed. In place of the blackness of space was a stream of delicate, grey clouds. Beneath the clouds was something that set the hairs on the back of Richard's neck standing on end.

"Flying saucers!" Richard cried. "They look like flying saucers!"

Pulling back the cruiser's joystick, Richard increased the craft's speed. However, his attempt to outrun the newcomers did not appear to be working.

SHOOMI'S SANCTUARY

Enter into the Cyber Dimension and engage optical recognition to find...

▶ Shoomi and Shoobi

Shoomi and Shoobi are still keeping up with our hero's adventures in the Cyber Dimension. Can you spot Richard's twin shadows somewhere in this issue in under three minutes?

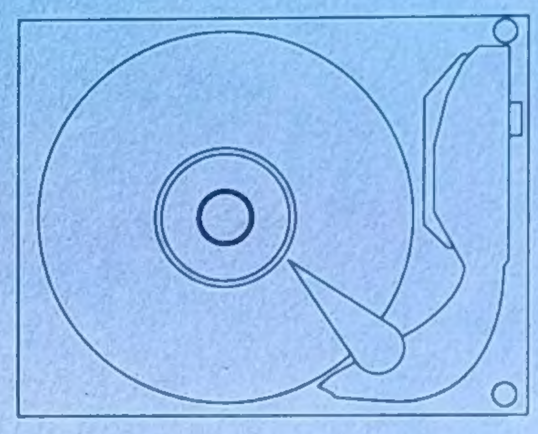
In issue 43 Shoomi and Shoobi were on page 675.

▶ Computer Challenge

Hidden somewhere in this issue is a vitally important computer component from the sinister Cyber Dimension. Use your visual skills to help Richard and his new friend Teeza locate it in less than three minutes.

When you have discovered the component's hiding place, can you guess what it is and what its function might be?

In the last issue a computer hard disk was hidden on page 683. Hard disks are storage areas for digital computer information such as programs and document files. They are able to electronically store vast amounts of data. Hard disks come in a variety of sizes. The smallest hard disk can usually store 20 megabytes of information. the largest can store in excess of 1.3 gigabytes (1300 megabytes).



▶ Games Boards

In this issue you will find the final piece of your **Mainframe Control** and **Cyber Chess** games board. Carefully use clear adhesive tape to stick the four pieces together. In the next issue you will receive the first part of your **Mainframe Control** and **Cyber Chess** games instruction booklet. This special booklet will also give you the rules to other games that you can play in *The Ancestral Trail.*

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In Issue 45

Cortix,
Mind Master

The adventures continue as Richard and Teeza meet the guardian of a computerized city. After battling the deadly mutators, Richard is forced to fight a mind battle.

plus

- **Part one of your special games instruction booklet. Learn how to play Cyber Chess, Mainframe Control and other games.**

Coming in Issue 46

Hydron, Mercury Monster

Richard returns to the sea of mercury to find the next Omni piece. There he encounters old and new adversaries. Will he prevail against them?

plus

2 more **Techscan** cards ▶ Part two of your games rules booklet for **Mainframe Control** and **Cyber Chess.**

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